his life. This, therefore, might well have been the first of them. The royalists had persistently negotiated with Bonaparte while he was yet a rising soldier. He seemed now to have reached the summit of power, and alone could open or bar the way to the restoration of Louis XVIII. Having toyed with their offers, it is claimed that he gave the pretender to understand that his own highest ambition was an Italian principality. Hopes, thus awakened, had strengthened the royalist party; but as its ranks grew in number dissension kept equal pace, until, while one faction, the strongest, standing on the strictest legitimacy, remained true to the so-called King, who was now living in Mittau, another, under the leadership of Artois, was scheming in England for that prince, and a third, weary of the petulant and quarrelsome feebleness of the other two, favored the young Due d'Enghien, and grew daily stronger in Paris by desertions from both. The members of the Enghien faction were indefatigable, and at last from among their Vendean supporters was formed a secret junta which, on the evening of December twenty-fourth, 1800, placed an infernal machine in front of the First Consul's carriage as he drove to the opera through the narrow street of St. Nicaise. His coachman, catching sight of the strange obstacle in time, swerved, and drove swiftly past, barely saving his passengers from the effects of a terrific explosion which occurred the moment after, killing outright several innocent persons, wounding sixty, and destroying about forty houses. The First Consul and his wife drove on, and, pale with excitement, appeared for a few moments in their box before the expectant audience, which had already heard the news. They then quietly withdrew. The effect on the public was electrical, and the measures subsequently taken by the government were heartily applauded.